



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Ritch Whyman
416-809-0025

Janitors, MPP Hold Press Conference outside Ministry of Labour

Call for an investigation of Impact Cleaning Services

TORONTO — A group of janitors were joined by MPP Cheri DiNovo (High Park – Parkdale) and the Service Employees International Union today at a press conference outside the offices of the Ministry of Labour.

The janitors are upset that their employer continues to violate workers' rights with impunity. "Nobody at the Labour Board, or Revenue Canada, or anybody else seems interested in investigating this company," says Steve Singer, one of the janitors who says he has not been fully paid. Singer spoke to a lawyer last year who asked for \$10,000 to take his case, but refused to pay that kind of fee "for something that should be my basic right."

Today he's glad to have come across the Justice for Janitors movement.

Singer filed a statement of claim in the Superior Court of Justice last week alleging that his employer, Impact Cleaning Services Limited, has failed to pay him overtime in accordance with the Employment Standards Act (ESA). A lawsuit was filed on behalf of Singer by SEIU Local 2 against Impact, seeking over \$23,000 in damages as a result of almost six years of unpaid overtime.

"It is ridiculous that in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, workers must mortgage their future in order to defend their most basic rights," said DiNovo, the Labour Standards critic for the NDP. She also had a strong message for the Labour Minister, Peter Fonseca, "there are no labour standards where labour standards are not enforced... we're at a place in Ontario where this Labour Ministry is not looking after the rights of the lowest paid workers of the province."

Earlier this year, Eugenia Nagar, an ex-employee of Impact, was finally given her last paycheck, eight months after she worked her final shift. She left the company last July because she couldn't stand the "abuse." "When I finally left they decided to not pay me," she said.

"The Ministry did respond to the complaint we filed on behalf of Ms. Nagar," said Tom Galivan, a union representative. "But it took eight months to get her two weeks pay. In the meantime she came close to getting evicted because she didn't have enough for rent."

Janitors in the Toronto area are perpetually in a precarious financial situation. Many earn minimum wage, or barely above it, however a growing number of workers are earning *less* than minimum wage.

Last year, a comprehensive complaint against Impact was filed with the Ministry of Labour alleging, among other things, that Impact employed a subcontracting scheme intended to circumvent various laws including the ESA and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. The scheme allows the company to pay cleaners less than the minimum wage and has them working without WSIB, EI or CPP benefits.

“I want to send a message to Impact,” says Singer. “They can’t be doing this to people. It’s against the law and they shouldn’t be getting away with it. I’d like to see some action on this, because apparently they’re still doing it.”

For more information on the complaints, please visit www.Negative-Impact.org

The Service Employees International Union is the largest and fastest growing union in North America, with 100,000 workers in Canada and 2 million workers across Canada, the United States and Puerto Rico.